

PRESS RELEASE

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Ironbound Community Delegation Brings A Message To City Hall: Save Land For Schools & Parks

Church, civic, business and education leaders, senior citizens and parents will deliver a message to Newark's Mayor, Planning Board and City Council on Thursday, March 9. The delegation will hold a Press Conference on the steps of City Hall at 10:30 AM, and then visit the offices of the Mayor, Planning Board and City Council to present hundreds of petitions and a formal organizational sign-on letter.

The sign-on letter and petitions ask City officials to designate land immediately for parks and schools on the City's Land Use Maps, which they are preparing as part of their new Masterplan. Land which is so marked can be held from development. It also addresses other quality of life issues such as nightmarish traffic and parking, environmental hazards, and better planning of any future development. Ironbound has seen an intense boom in the building of residential homes, with nearly 1000 units approved and built in the last several years. Schools in the Ironbound are 62% over their capacity, on the average. One school is 200% over capacity.

"If we are to build new schools, our overriding concern has to be locking in the sites," said Joseph Rendeiro, principal of Hawkins St. School. "If we don't move quickly on sites which real estate developers also are eying, there soon will be no sites to select."

"There is no comprehensive planning going on, and the quality of life is suffering because of that," said Father George Lutz, from St. James Church. "People are moving out of the neighborhood, instead of staying here to raise their children."

Ironbound churches which have endorsed the petition drive include:

- Our Lady of Fatima Church
- St. James Church
- St. Aloysius Church
- Immaculate Heart of Mary Church
- St. Benedict's Church
- Wolff Memorial Presbyterian Church,
- Grace Community Lutheran Church
- Trinity Reformed Church
- St. Stephans United Church of Christ.

Ironbound organizations which have endorsed the petition drive include:

- Ironbound Little League
- Ironbound Boys and Girls Club
- Portuguese American Congress
- Congress of Portuguese American Educators
- Ironbound Community Corporation
- Aspen Riverpark Tenants Association
- Associacao Recreativa Cultural Gafanhense.

Many individual businesses have also signed in support of this effort.